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THE INDIRECT DUTIES OF LIFE.

INDIRECT duties may be classed with 'imperfect sympathies;' perhaps, indeed, the non-fulfilment of the former may be due to the existence of the latter, if that can be said to have an existence which is in itself a negation, a want. It is curious, but unquestionably true, that the neglect of indirect duties not only may be, but often is, accompanied by the ardent and conscientious discharge of direct duties. For instance, who does not know the model wife and mother, always at the beck and call of husband and children, always at work for them, cooking, mending, making—whose husband never has to complain of an ill-cooked dinner or buttonless shirt? whose children's socks are always darned, their collars always clean, their boots in good repair, their hair well kept, their nails not unsightly? Well for all belonging to her is such a mother; not for one moment would we be supposed to undervalue her good gifts; but we do grudge a little the supreme indifference she occasionally displays to the indirect duties of life. If her husband's sisters happen to be in business, and need his help, his counsel or countenance perhaps, the devoted but exacting, the self-effacing and at the same time selfish wife resents the call for sympathy outside her own immediate circle. 'I didn't marry the whole family,' is her excuse to herself for the non-fulfilment of so indirect a duty. Even so does the excellent husband on his part but too often regard his wife's relations and his duty to them; neither did he 'marry the whole crew of them;' so he buttons up his 'British breeches-pocket,' and does not give to his brother-in-law Lazarus even the crumbs of his monetary 'good things.'

How is the indirect duty fulfilled in travelling towards those who are not metaphorically but actually going the same road with us? Do we not establish ourselves in the most advantageous quarters obtainable, and because we have come first, fancy ourselves, some of us, entitled to be best served? Those who enter the carriage sub-

sequently and endanger our sovereign comfort meet but sour looks, cold welcome, whatever may be the evidence of need in face or appearance; appealing to our dormant sympathy not seldom quite in vain.

In places of so-called amusement, how fare the indirect duties? We have come on purpose to enjoy ourselves, and to help others to do the same? Not many evenings since we were at a concert where the chairs were arranged with a mathematical regard to economy of space, but an unmathematical regard to the difference of the size of the bodies to be accommodated in that space. (A gross disregard of an indirect duty on the part of the managers of that concert, by the way.) So, inevitably the larger bodies overlapped the smaller ones. All bowed to necessity, some courteously, some stolidly, some fussily, some despairingly. Herring-wise, we arranged ourselves for the function. When the enjoyment had lasted some little time, long enough for cramped limbs to torment the sensitive, we saw a pale little lady on our right put a timid toe on to the rung of the chair in front of her. Immediately its occupant, a lady also, glared round at the victim of tight packing, who withdrew the offending toe with a murmured apology. Now, on our left, a lively lady, at the first note of the loud bassoon, with both feet placed comfortably on the rung of the chair before her, had kept time—her time, not the band's—to the performance, quite amazingly regardless of any annoyance she might, and did, inflict on those about her. The world might have gone better here, we venture to think, if the indirect duties had not been so neglected.

But it is not only at places of amusement that such things 'can be, without our special wonder.' Mark the reception of a stranger in some town as well as country churches. Are all anxious to welcome him—to cut short his period of embarrassment, of hesitation—to make him feel at home in the place of worship? We are afraid not. And of all the bad blood ever bred between old acquaintance, the very blackest we have known

was occasioned by the reseating of a certain parish church. Nay, with our own eyes we have seen a man, before the commencement of the service, climbing over the back into a 'slip,' the two entrances to which were barred by stalwart youths, thus outflanking them; while they were compelled to a sullen endurance of the claimant's presence during the service, as also to the battery of sly amused glances from their friends and neighbours.

A schoolboy's idea of honour is a byword; his notion of the indirect duty as owing to his teachers is as eccentric. The patient poring over perverse or dull or ignorant themes, the weary watchfulness never relaxed, the fearful monotony of the grinding, to a man, is but an incident to the boy, but is the life of his instructor. 'They are paid for it,' says the lad; and the hire makes all things square, even if it does not allow him a margin for allowable aggravation.

In any little set or coterie in town or country there is often a Mr A overflowing with the milk of human kindness to all about him except Mr B; or a Mrs C who cannot stand Mrs B. Sometimes a whole family like the Ss are at peace with all mankind save the Js. And their quarrels, if not so tragic, are as unreasonable as the quarrels of the Montagues and Capulets of Verona. If not professing the Iroquois ethics, or saying with Colonel Newcome, 'The day I take that man's hand, sir, I shall be a scoundrel,' they yet not unfrequently manage pretty little vendettas, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness, and with an unaccusing conscience too.

Then the man of wit, who, of course, must have a butt, who never hesitates between his jest and his friend, who gives a stab in the back with some anecdote of you that sets all your neighbours grinning, who wounds a feeling, rips up your self-respect, knocks down your pride, and all with the happy indifference of a highwayman. We grant he requires some, much magnanimity, and so, if not virtuous himself, may be the cause of virtue in others.

Even the animal creation—as we animals are fond of calling the brutes—even they must indulge their vagaries of duty. We may pay his tax and feed and house him, pet and play with him, bid our friends 'love me, love my dog;' but not always is his duty ours in return. Some one of our domestics 'has given him medicines, it could not be else,' and the rogue bestows in bountiful measure the duty, love, obedience which ought to be ours, on the groom, to whom, perhaps, our own indirect duty is but ill performed, as is our favourite's to us.

There is a fine instance of an indirect duty, pointed out by Dr Johnson, in the following extract from Boswell's *Life*, which illustrates our meaning better than any words of our own can do. 'To a lady who endeavoured to vindicate herself from blame for neglecting social attention to worthy neighbours, by saying, "I would go to them, if it would do them any good," he said: "What good, madam, do you expect to have in your power to do them? It is showing them respect, and *that* is doing them good." To do to every one as you would wish them to do to you, is the fulfilling of all duties, direct or indirect; but this, as Sir Arthur Helps said, 'is a rule too well known to be regarded.'

At the moment of writing, the whole of Christendom, it is not too much to say, is stirred to its depths by the heroic fulfilment of an indirect duty, for such we must regard Father Damien's devotion to the lepers of Molokai.

MY SHIPMATE LOUISE.

THE ROMANCE OF A WRECK.

CHAPTER VII.—A SEA-FUNERAL.

THE doctor sat on the starboard side of the table, and I caught him eyeing me with a meaning expression that somewhat puzzled me. Once, indeed, he winked, and fearing that he might be a little tipsy and easily led into a demonstrativeness of manner sufficiently marked to catch the skipper's attention, I took some pains not to see him. Old Keeling, at the head of the table, his face shining like a mahogany figure-head under a fresh coat of varnish, was in the middle of the story of his action with the corsair in the Bay of Bengal, when Mr Prance entered the cuddy and quietly took his seat. He fell to work upon a piece of corned beef whilst he seemed to listen with a face of respectful courtesy to Keeling's long-winded yarn, with its running commentary of, 'How brave!' 'What dreadful creatures!' 'How very awful!' and the like from the ladies.

The skipper came to an end, and Mr Prance said to me: 'A plucky fight, sir.'

'Very,' said I, watching for that twinkle of eye which his voice suggested.

A few minutes later the mate went on to the poop, and I stepped to the quarter-deck to smoke a cheroot. Whilst I was preparing the weed to light it, Dr Hemmeridge came out of the cuddy.

'You may be interested to know,' said he, 'that your ugly friend is dead.'

'And that is what you wished to convey to me by winking?' said I.

He nodded with a smile that could scarcely be called sober. 'You took a particular interest in him,' he exclaimed, 'and so I thought I would give you the news before I made my report to the captain.'

'You are very good,' I exclaimed with a sarcastic bow.

'In fact, Mr Dugdale,' he continued, 'I am going to pay another visit to the fore-castle, as there is something in the manner of this fellow's death that puzzles me. Indeed, it is as likely as not I may make a post-mortem examination.' Here he lifted his hand and eyed it an instant. I noticed that it trembled. He immediately grew conscious of his action, blushed slightly, and spoke with a note of confusion: 'The mischief of it is, the Jacks object to this sort of inquisitions. Then, again, the light forward is abominably bad, and there is too much risk when there are ladies aboard in any attempt to smuggle the body aft.—Would you like to see the man? You admired him in life, you know.'

I hung in the wind a moment, then said: 'Yes; I will go with you;' and we trudged forwards.

The sailors' dwelling-place was what is called a topgallant fore-castle; a structure in the bows

of the ship corresponding with the cuddy and its poop-deck aft. It should have been familiar ground to me; yet I found something of real novelty, too, in the sight as I followed the doctor through the port door and entered what resembled a vast gloomy cave, resonant with the sound of seas smitten by the cutwater, with a slush-lamp swinging amidships under a begrimed beam, and a line of daylight falling a little beyond fair through the open scuttle or deck-hatch, and resembling in its dusty shaft and defined margin a sunbeam striking through a chink of the shutter of a darkened room.

There was at least a score of hammocks hung up under the ceiling or upper deck, with here and there the faces of mariners showing over them, or perhaps the half of a stockinged leg, and nothing else of the man inside but *that* to be seen. There were figures seated on boxes, stolidly smoking, or stitching at their clothes: grim, silent, unshaven salts, stealing out upon the eye in that strange commingling of dull light and dim shadow, in proportions so grotesque and even startling that they hardly needed to vanish on a sudden to persuade one they were creatures of another universe.

The doctor made his way to a bunk on the port side, almost abreast of the scuttle, where the light came sifting through the gloom with power enough to define shape and even colour. In this bunk lay a motionless figure under a blanket, and a small square of canvas over his head. The bunks in the immediate neighbourhood were empty, and the fellows who swung in hammocks a little distance away peered dumbly at us, with eyes which gleamed like discs of polished steel amid the hair on their faces.

Dr Hemmeridge pulled the bit of sailcloth from the face of the body, and there lay before me the most hideous mask that could enter the mind of any man, saving the Master who drew Caliban, to figure. Nothing showed of the eyes through the contracted lids but the whites. There was a drop in the under-jaw that had twisted the creature's hare-lip into the distortion of a shocking grin.

I took one look and recoiled, and as I did so, a fellow who had been watching us at the fore-castle door approached and said respectfully: 'There ain't no doubt of his being stone-dead, sir, I suppose.'

Hemmeridge turned from the body. There was an odd look of loathing and puzzlement in his face.

'Oh yes, man, quite dead,' he answered.—'An amazing corpse, don't you think, Mr Dugdale? Good enough to preserve in spirits as a show for the museum of an hospital.'

'I hope,' exclaimed a deep voice from a hammock that swung near, 'if so be that that there Crabb's dead and gone, he ain't going to be let lie to p'ison the perfumed hatmosphere of this here drawing-room.'

'No, my man,' answered the doctor, looking at the body; 'we'll have him out of this in good time.—But there's nothing to hurt in his remaining here a bit.'

'What did he do of?' asked an old sailor, who had risen from his chest, and stood surveying us as he leaned against a stanchion with the inverted bowl of a sooty pipe betwixt his teeth.

'Now, what would be the good,' cried the doctor fretfully, 'of giving this fore-castle a lecture on the causes of death? What did he die of?—A plague on't, Mr Dugdale! Do you know I've a great mind to take a peep inside him, if only in the interests of the medical journals.'

'I'm beginning to feel a little faint,' said I, with a movement towards the fore-castle door.

'Oh well, Mr Willard,' exclaimed Hemmeridge, addressing the man who had approached us, and who proved to be the sail-maker, 'have him stitched up as soon as you please, and then get him on to the fore-hatch with a tarpaulin over him, till other orders come forward.'

'Are ye likely to hold an inquest, doctor?' asked the sailmaker, whose Roman nose and thin frill or streamlet of wool-white whisker running under his chin from one ear to another gave him a queer sort of yearning *raised* haggard look in that light, as he inclined his head forward to ask the question.

'Oh, it wouldn't be an inquest,' responded the doctor with a short laugh. 'But it is death from natural causes, anyway,' added he in a careless voice; 'and so we'll go aft again, Mr Dugdale; unless, indeed, you would like to take another view of your friend?'

I shoved past him, and got out of the fore-castle at once; and never before did the sunshine seem more glorious, nor the ocean breeze sweeter, nor the swelling heights of the Indianan more airily beautiful and majestic. In fact, I had felt half suffocated in that fore-castle; and as I made my way to the poop, I respired the gushing wind as it hummed past me over the bulwarks as thirstily as ever shipwrecked sailor lapped water.

That same evening, some time after dinner, I went on to the poop. It was a fine clear moonless night, with a pleasant breeze out of the north-east. There were a few passengers moving about the deck, but it was too dark to make sure of them, though the delicate sheen in the air, falling in a sort of silver showering from the velvet-dark heaven of brilliants on high, enabled one to see forms and to follow the movements of things clearly.

'Is it true, do you know, that one of the sailors died this afternoon?' exclaimed a low, clear, but most melodious voice by my side.

It was Miss Temple. She started as I quitted my leaning posture and turned to her.

'Oh, I beg your pardon,' she exclaimed in a changed note.

It was very clear she had mistaken me—for Colledge, for all I can tell. She was alone. Yet had she come from the cuddy, she must certainly have seen the young sprig playing at the table with Fairthorne at chess.

'I should be glad to answer your question,' said I coolly, 'if you care to stop and listen, Miss Temple.'

By the starlight I could see her fine imperious dark eyes bent on me.

'It is curious,' she exclaimed—and perhaps by daylight I should have found some sign of a smile in her face; but her countenance showed like marble in that shadow—'that this should be the second time I have asked you about what is happening in the ship. You have been a sailor, I think, Mr Dugdale?'

'Mr Colledge has doubtless told you so,' said I.
'Yes; it was he who told me. You share his cabin, I believe. Will you tell me if it be true that one of the sailors has died?'

'It is true,' said I: 'a sailor named Crabb died this morning.'

'Has he been buried?'

'No; that ceremony is to take place in the morning, I believe.'

'Our ship, then, will sail all night long with a dead body on board?' she exclaimed with a lift of her eyes to the stars and then a look seawards. 'Are not the superstitions of sailors opposed to such burdens?'

'Jack does not love dead bodies,' said I, making as if to resume my leaning posture at the rail, as one interrupted in a reverie; for harmless as her questions were, I did not at all relish her haughty commanding manner of putting them; besides, this was the first time I had exchanged a sentence with her since that night of the collision in the Channel; and the unconquerable delight I took in gazing at her beauty, that *now*, to my ardent young eyes, was idealised, by the starlit dusk by which I surveyed her, into graces beyond expression fascinating, affected me also as a sort of injury to my own dignity, thanks to the mood that had grown up in me through what I had said and thought of her. 'But,' continued I carelessly, 'what is regarded as a superstition by the sailor is a stroke of nature common to us all. One may travel far without meeting any person who will choose a dead body for company.'

She walked to the rail a few feet away from where I stood, and looked at the water for some while in silence, as though she had not heard me.

'I would rather die anywhere than at sea,' she exclaimed, as though thinking aloud, with a sudden crossing of her hands upon her breast, as if a chill had entered her from the dark ocean. 'The horror of being buried in that void there would keep me alive. Oh, if it be true, as Shakespeare says, that dreams may visit us in our graves—in our graves ashore, where there are daisies and green turf and the twinkling shadows of leaves, and often the full moon and the high summer night shedding a peace like that of God himself, passing all understanding, upon the dead—*what* should be the visions that enter into the sleep of one floating deep down in that great mystery there?'

This was a passage of humour which I was quite young enough to have coaxed, and have sought to improve in any other fine young woman after her pattern; but my temper just then happened to be perverse and my mood obnoxious to sentiment.

'Why,' said I, pretending to stare at the water, 'what's the difference between being lowered in a coffin and being hove overboard in a canvas sack with a lump of holystone at one's feet, when one doesn't know it? If one could believe in the mermaid, in coral pavilions illuminated with cressets brilliant with sea-fire, in those sweet songs which were formerly sung by *fishy* virgins, who swept their lyres of gold with arms of ivory and fingers of pearl, I believe that when my time came I should be very willing to take the plunge, in fact *choose* it in preference to'—

I brought my eyes away from the water, and

saw her figure in the companion-way down which she floated!

A minute later, Colonel Bannister came along. He approached me close, staring hard, and said: 'Oh, it's you, Dugdale! I thought it was the second mate.—Here's a pretty go! There's a man dead.'

'He couldn't help it, Colonel,' said I.

'Ay, but what did he die of?' he shouted. 'I've asked Hemmeridge, and he won't give the disease a name. I don't want it to go further, but betwixt you and me and the bedpost, hang me'—here he subdued his voice into an extraordinary croaking whisper—'if I don't believe that Hemmeridge—and he lifted his hand to his mouth in a posture of drinking. 'My contention is, they've got no right to keep the body. What's the good of it? Since Hemmeridge is mute, who's going to say that the seaman didn't die of smallpox? That's it, you see! Smallpox! and a crowd of us aft who, if a plague should break out, must perish. Mind, I say *perish*!—Where's that second mate?'

He impetuously crossed the deck and hurried forward on the weather side of the poop. A few minutes afterwards I heard the second mate's voice. 'Wheel there! where are you driving the ship to?' he shouted from the forward part of the poop; but merely as an excuse, I think, to break away from the Colonel, who had now tailed on to him.

As he came rumbling aft, I went forward.

It was the most delicate gentle weather imaginable next morning when I went on deck an hour before breakfast-time to get a cold bath in the ship's head, which to my mind is the very noblest luxury the sea has to yield: nothing to be done but to strip, drop over the side on to the grating betwixt the headboards, well out of sight of the poop, where the spout of the head-pump, as it is called, commands you, and so be played on for half an hour at a spell by some ordinary seaman, who will be glad to oblige you for the value of a glass of grog. Oh, the delight past language of the sensation sinking through and through one to the very marrow that comes with the gushing of the sparkling green brine pouring away from one in foam back into the flashing heart of the deep out of which it is sucked!

As I passed the forehatch on my way aft, I observed a heap of something lying under a tarpaulin; at the same moment the boatswain stepped out of his berth.

'Have ye heard what time the funeral's to take place, sir?'

'Bless me!' cried I with a start, 'I had forgotten all about it. Small wonder that we and our troubles should be compared to sparks that fly upwards, for we are extinguished in a breath and clean forgotten.' I glanced at the tarpaulin on the hatchway with an ugly shuddering recollection coming upon me of the face of the man as I had last viewed him dead in his bunk. 'No,' said I; 'I am unable to tell you when they mean to bury him. The sooner the better, I should say.'

The breakfast-bell then sounding, I entered the cuddy and took my place. I had thought to catch a glance, perhaps *one* glance, during the meal from Miss Temple, who might probably

recollect her few words with me on the preceding evening, and her cool trick of sliding off to let me talk aloud to myself. But she never turned her eyes my way. She sometimes spoke across the table to Mr Colledge, once inclined her fine figure towards Captain Keeling to respond to some remark of his, and occasionally exchanged a sentence with her aunt. But the rest of us might have been as much hidden as the body of Crabb was forward, for all the attention she honoured us with.

'I am glad that this funeral is going to take place,' Mr Johnson said to me. 'I have promised a friend of mine who owns a newspaper in London a series of articles on this voyage, and down to this time I haven't quite seen my way. For what has happened proper to tell? Dash my wig! saying that collision, of which I couldn't make head nor tail, and dare not therefore attempt, what ghost of an incident good for what I may call word-painting has occurred?'

'This burial should give you the chance you want,' said I.

'Yes,' he exclaimed; 'I shall be able to do it justice, I believe. I am a little uncertain in the matter of nautical terms; and when I've finished the account of it, I should be glad if you'd listen to it, Mr Dugdale, and correct any trifling technical errors I may happen to make. Even now, I'll be shot if I can tell the difference between starboard and larboard—never can remember, somehow. The words are so confoundingly alike, you know.'

'If I were you,' said I, 'I should not suffer ignorance of the sea-life to hinder me from writing fully about it. Few sailors read; nobody else understands the calling. Say what you like, and you need only dash your absurdities into your canvas with a cocksure brush to be accepted as an authority.'

'Still,' he exclaimed, 'in an account of a funeral at sea I should like to have the rigging right.'

I assured him that I should be glad to hear his account when he had written it; and soon afterwards we left the table and went on deck.

The ship was this morning a very grand show of canvas. At the peak flew the red ensign half-mast high, languidly floating in rich brand-new folds of sunny crimson to the quiet breathing of the wind over the quarter. It was a hint of what was to come, and you noticed the influence of it upon the passengers, who talked in subdued voices, and walked thoughtfully, as though it were the Sabbath and Divine service was shortly to be held.

Shortly before ten o'clock, Smallridge, taking his stand upon the fore-castle head, applied his silver whistle to his lips, and sent the shrill metallic summons ringing throughout the length of the ship, following it with a deep-chested hurricane roar of 'All hands 'tend funeral.' The Jacks had been off work since breakfast-time, and to the boatswain's melodious invitation they came tumbling out of the fore-castle all in the spruce warm-weather attire of those days.

The first, third, and fourth mates took their place a little abaft the gangway, leaving the second officer on the poop to look after the ship. A young reefer clad in bright buttons stood at the

bell, which he struck in funeral time, constantly glancing around him to find some one to exchange a grin with. When all were assembled, the skipper stalked solemnly out of the cuddy, Prayer-book in hand. Keeling was a man of strong piety, and his manner of addressing himself to this solemn business was full of an old-fashioned awe and reverence, which one might look a long way round among modern sea-captains to find the like of, in such a performance, at all events, as that of burying the remains of a fore-castle hand. Most of the passengers were grouped along the break of the poop to witness the ceremony. I see that large and stirring picture very freshly even now: the mass of whiskered faces, one showing past another, nearly every jaw moving to the gnawing of a quid; Keeling and his officers in full fig; the many-coloured dresses of the ladies fluttering along the line of the poop rail; I recall the deep hush that settled down upon the fine ship, no sound to break it but the tolling of the bell and a noise of water lazily washing alongside. High above us the great squares of canvas rose in brilliant clouds, one swelling to another with a soft swaying of the whole majestic fabric, as though the vessel were something sentient, and was keeping time with her mastheads to the mournful chimes on the quarter-deck.

The bell ceased; the midshipman struck ten o'clock upon it; the Jacks on the quarter-deck made a lane, and down it from forward came four hearty seamen, bearing upon their shoulders a hatch grating, on which was the hammock containing the body, covered with England's commercial ensign. One end of this grating was rested upon the lee rail; then the captain began to read the sea funeral service. As the captain paused in his delivery, the ensign was whipped off, the grating tilted, and the white hammock flashed overboard. I was at the lee rail, and glanced down into the sea alongside as the hammock sped from the bulwark. But the ocean coffin, instead of sinking, went floating astern like a lifebuoy, bobbing bravely upon the summer tumble, and lifting and sinking upon the swell as duck-like as a waterborne lifeboat.

I believe no man saw this but myself, everybody listening reverentially to the closing words of the skipper's recital from the Prayer-book. I walked hastily aft to observe the hammock as it veered into our wake, and beckoned to Mr Cocker, who at once crossed the deck.

'See there!' cried I, pointing to the thing that was frisking in the eddies upturned by our keel, and crawling into the distance to the slow progress of the ship. 'Friend Crabb seems in no hurry to knock at Davy Jones's door.'

'I expect the fool of a sailmaker forgot to weight the body,' said he. 'Unless,' he added, with a little change in his voice, as if he meant what he said, whilst he did not wish me to suppose him in earnest, 'the chap was too great a rascal when alive to sink now that he's nothing but a body.'

'I thought,' I exclaimed, 'that wicked sailors, like Falstaff, had an alacrity in sinking.'

'I'll tell you a fact, then, Mr Dugdale,' said he. 'I was aboard a ship where we buried a man that had murdered a negro in Jamaica. He was a ruffian down to the heels of his yellow feet, sir, with a deal worse on his conscience, in our

opinion, than even the blood of a darkey. It was a dead calm when we dropped him over the side with a twelve-pound shot at the clews of his hammock. Down he went; but up he came again, and lay wobbling under the main-chains. The captain, not liking such a neighbour, ordered a boat over with a fresh weight for the corpse. It was another twelve-pound shot, and down it took him, as all hands expected. But scarce was the boat hoisted when the chief-mate, who was looking over the rail, sings out quietly: "Here's Joey again." And *there* lay the hammock just under the mizzen chains. 'Twas lucky a breath of wind came along just then and sneaked the barque away, for had the calm lasted, the men would have sworn that the body had got hold of the ship and wouldn't let her move. But as to our being ever able to sink it—he shook his head, and pointing to the hammock that was now showing like a fleck of foam in the tail of our wake, he exclaimed: 'It's the same with Crabb. He's of the sort that Old Davy will have nothing to do with.'

The boatswain's pipe shrilled out again; the ceremony was over. The sailors stalked gravely towards the fore-castle, the passengers distributed themselves about the poop.

'Quite worth seeing, don't you think?' said Mr Johnson, coming up to me in the manner of a man fresh from a stage performance that has pleased him. 'Only let me be sure of my nautical details, and I believe I can see my way to a very pretty article, Mr Dugdale.'

SOME ODD THINGS ABOUT NUMBERS.

THAT there is luck in odd numbers is a popular saying, characterised by a delightful ambiguity which renders it equally correct in the case of either good or bad luck. The expression, however, is generally taken to mean that good luck may be attributed to odd numbers; and whether or not they may be justified in assuming that even ones must consequently be unlucky, many country women will only put their hens to set on an odd number of eggs, in the belief that otherwise no chickens would be hatched.

Numbers both odd and even have always been credited with mystic powers capable of influencing the destinies of man. It is possible that this belief may have been due in the first instance to a sense of reverence and awe with which the immutable laws of mathematics were probably regarded by the ignorant; the fact, too, that the third, fifth, or sixth note in an octave harmonises with the first, may in some measure account for the superstitious importance with which the numbers three, five, and six have been regarded; and the regularity and frequency with which certain numbers occur in Nature's handiworks may also have given rise to a belief in some mystic powers inherent in the numbers themselves. Thus, two is constantly before us in bilateral symmetry and the number of the sexes; five occurs as the number of petals which many flowers possess or the number of fingers and toes on each of our hands and feet—the thumb, of course, being

reckoned as one of the fingers; and as an instance in which six occurs we may mention the hexagonal cells of a honeycomb.

It is unnecessary to give examples of the mystical use of numbers in the Scriptures, for no one who has read the Bible can have failed to notice the frequency with which certain numbers are used, evidently intentionally and with a symbolical significance.

In many of the legends which may be found amongst the North American Indians, two witches or medicine women play a prominent part. This may be merely a curious coincidence; but more probably it is the result of some forgotten superstition connected with numbers; for in the Old World, two has an evil reputation; and so far as monarchs have been concerned, it certainly seems to have been an unlucky number, many of those who were second of a name having had troubled reigns or met with untimely fates.

There is much superstitious regard for the number three in the popular mind, and the third repetition of anything is generally looked upon as a crisis. Thus, an article may twice be lost and recovered; but the third time that it is lost, it is gone for good. Twice a man may pass through some great danger in safety; but the third time he loses his life. If, however, the mystic three can be successfully passed, all is well. Three was called by Pythagoras the perfect number, and we frequently find its use symbolical of Deity; thus, we might mention the trident of Neptune, the three-forked lightning of Jove, and the three-headed dog of Pluto. The idea of trinity is not confined to Christianity, but occurs in several religions. In mythology, also, we find three Fates, three Furies, and three Graces; and coming nearer to our own times, Shakespeare introduces his three witches. In public-house signs three seems to play an important part, for we frequently meet with 'Three Cups,' 'Three Jolly Sailors,' 'Three Bells,' 'Three Tuns,' 'Three Feathers'—in fact, that number of almost anything of which a fertile imagination can conceive a trio. In nursery rhymes and tales this number is not unknown; and if we look back to the days of our childhood, most of us will call to mind the three wise men of Gotham who took a sea-voyage in a bowl, not to mention the three blind mice that had their tails cut off by the farmer's wife. Perhaps there is some occult power in the number which governs the division of novels into three volumes, and induces doctors to order their medicine to be taken thrice daily. It is said that some tribes of savages cannot count beyond three; but although they may have no words to express higher numbers, perhaps we should be scarcely justified in assuming that they are incapable of appreciating the value of the latter.

Five is a mystic number which was supposed to possess great influence over demons and evil spirits. Probably primitive man—not unlike some of his descendants at the present day—reckoned up his little accounts on his fingers, ultimately using his hand as a symbol of five, and consequently attaching extra importance to that number.

Seven was considered a holy number, and throughout the Scriptures it is frequently used as such. The seventh son of a seventh son was formerly looked upon as a natural doctor who possessed miraculous powers of healing the sick, and could, in fact, frequently effect a cure by merely touching the sufferer. Even at the present day this piece of superstition has not died out, and occasionally one may still meet with these so-called natural doctors, who fully believe in the marvellous powers ascribed to them. Amongst the Gaboon tribes there is a superstition that on the seventh day after the birth of a child, the woman who is nursing the mother is in danger of being converted into an animal by some evil spirit, if the necessary steps are not taken to prevent her metamorphosis. According to a popular superstition, seven years of bad luck may be expected by the unfortunate person who chances to break a mirror. There is a general belief with most people that they undergo some change every seven years; man's life is popularly divided into seven ages, and formerly it was supposed that seven and nine were capable of exerting much subtle influence over men, the product of these two numbers being particularly powerful in this respect. Thus, sixty-three years was called the grand climacteric, and that age was considered a very important crisis in a man's life. Women, on the other hand, were supposed to be more susceptible to the influence of six. Probably it was this belief in the supposed influence of nine and six on men's lives which originally gave rise to the custom of granting leases for multiples of seven or nine years. Long leases are granted for ninety-nine or nine hundred and ninety-nine years, instead of a hundred or a thousand years, and there is, we believe, a piece of superstition that otherwise the hundredth or thousandth year would be under the influence of the Evil One.

Nine, a trinity of trinities, is the perfect plural, and is credited with mystic properties. As might be supposed, therefore, many superstitions are connected with it. The first unmarried man passing beneath the lintel post of a door over which has been hung a pod containing nine peas, will marry the maid who placed it there; and a piece of worsted with nine knots tied in it is considered a charm for a sprained ankle. Nine is not in every case a lucky number, however, for evil-doers regard the nine tails of the 'cat' with very little favour; to see nine magpies is considered an ill omen; and the nine of diamonds has been called—although no one seems to know why—the 'Curse of Scotland.'

Twelve is of constant recurrence. Thus, there were twelve tribes of Israel and twelve apostles; a year is divided into twelve months, and the Zodiac contains twelve signs.

It is a well-known piece of superstition that if thirteen people sit down to table together one of them will die within a year; and probably, as has been suggested, the origin of this belief may be traced to the Paschal Supper. Even at the present day, many people, who certainly ought to possess more sense, are reluctant to take part in a dinner or supper party containing the unlucky number of guests. Some, indeed, will even refuse to sit at the same table with twelve others; and formerly in France there were men who gained a livelihood

by attending dinner-parties and making up the number of guests to fourteen in cases of emergency, where it was discovered at the last moment that only thirteen were present.

JULIUS VERNON:

A STORY OF HYDE PARK.

CHAPTER VII.

THERE was a long sitting of the Marlborough Street police court that day, and at the conclusion of it the prisoner was committed for trial for the wilful murder of Margaret Neale on the night of the 10th of June. The evidence was all on one side, and every item of it appeared to go home with fatal force. The testimony given at the inquest was repeated, and the Countess of Southfort readily identified the handwriting of the old letters found in Faune's lodgings. There could be no doubt whatever as to their being the letters of the deceased woman to her husband, written at various times before he left England. A fatal revelation, unlooked-for and emphatic, flowed from them. The last was dated 'October 25th 188-' and referred to the imminent departure of the husband for India; and it was proved that Claude Faune sailed from Portsmouth in the troopship *Euphrates* on the 29th of the same month. It did not need Frank Holmes, who remembered the date so well, to establish this fact; but he also remembered that, if Faune were the recipient of those letters, that last and momentous letter from the dead wife must have been received by the husband while he was staying with himself the week before embarkation.

The evidence of detective Burton is already known to the reader; he had nothing to add to it, and felt his case completed by the discovery of the letters. Mr Clayton was sworn, and admitted that Faune was in the habit, when he came to his house, of staying till past ten; pressed on the point, he said he did not recollect an occasion, for several weeks prior to the murder, of the prisoner going before ten o'clock. Further, he had to confess that the prisoner's departure on that Saturday evening was rather abrupt, and caused him some surprise, as he had not alluded during the evening to any purpose of going so early.

Burton made no mention in his evidence of Frank Holmes having seen and met the prisoner at Albert Gate; it was unnecessary, and the officer did not wish to drag the young man into the case without sufficient reason.

The garrulous and communicative landlady did not follow the example. She deposed to Mr Holmes calling at her house, and telling her he had seen the prisoner at Albert Gate, coming homeward at a quarter past nine. This led to Holmes being called, much to his annoyance, to corroborate the point. He did no more. But the woman went on to say that Mr Faune had told her that he was about to marry a very wealthy and beautiful young lady.

Poor Mr Clayton was recalled after the witness went down, and had to admit that the prisoner had been a suitor for his daughter's hand; that he himself had assented to the suit, and had

believed the marriage would soon have taken place. This was a powerful point for the prosecution.

The prisoner's solicitor put very few questions to the witnesses. He seemed to feel that the case on the other side was too strong and well-knit to be lightly assaulted, and that it was best to reserve his energies until he found some ground to fight upon. He only asked Mr Clayton if there had been a formal engagement between his daughter and the prisoner, to which the answer was a negative. It was apparently without effect, and the solicitor said he would reserve his defence. Nobody thought that he had, or could have, any substantial defence; the only points which seemed open to him were the absence of all evidence tending to establish communication between Margaret Neale and the prisoner since the latter's return to England, and of any proof of resemblance between the signature of 'Julius Vernon' in the register and the known handwriting of Claude Faune at the same period. Both were strong points, the former specially so; but they were merely negative, against a tremendous and compact array of positive evidence on the other side.

Mr Clayton touched Frank Holmes on the shoulder outside the police court. 'Will you come home with me and stay to dinner?'

'Thank you; not this evening. I have several things to do.'

'Well, jump into this cab, and I will drop you at the Corner.—What do you think of the case now?' he asked as they drove off.

'It looks bad enough.'

'Bad enough! I hardly see how it could be worse for him.'

'It would be worse if they could bring to light any correspondence between Margaret Neale and Faune since the latter's return to England. That is still wanting, isn't it?'

'Such a fabric as a complete case is seldom heard of,' said Mr Clayton with a shake of his head. 'I fear in the present instance they can do without that evidence; and who knows what may be discovered between now and his trial? They have only been two days at the case.'

'Who knows?' Holmes repeated absently. 'Yes; for the time I must admit they have done remarkably well; but hasn't it come very easy to them?'

'So you will not come home with me, Frank?' said Mr Clayton after a pause. 'I should be glad if you would, if only to talk to Mary. I find it terribly hard. Poor girl! Ah, Frank, I wish it had been otherwise!'

The young man knew what he meant, and shook his head. 'It cannot be otherwise now, Mr Clayton,' he answered gently. 'Let us not think of these things. Tell Mary I will be mindful of my promise this morning.'

'What was it, Frank?'

'Something I promised to try and do for her—no matter now; another time I shall tell you, should it be worth the telling. Tell her I am going to do my best.'

'Very well, Frank, very well,' the banker said with a sigh. They were now at Hyde Park Corner, and the cab drew up to allow Holmes to alight. 'Perhaps you will look in to-morrow evening?'

'Perhaps I may. Good-night.'

'Good-night.'

The cab moved on, but had hardly proceeded twenty yards when it stopped; and Holmes, looking back, saw Mr Clayton beckoning him with his umbrella. 'Come round to the bank early to-morrow,' he said; 'I want to ask you something, and almost forgot to mention it. Will you call?'

Holmes promised that he would call, and then turned back along Piccadilly on his way to the Strand. He was very full of that idea of his which had struck him by the spot where Margaret Neale had been murdered, an idea which, if he should be able to follow it up, would end in the unequivocal condemnation, or equally unequivocal acquittal, of Claude Faune.

Walking down the Haymarket buried in his thoughts, Holmes was disagreeably interrupted by a brougham drawing suddenly up by the pavement and hearing his name called. He stepped over to the carriage, and saw Musgrave and his wife. Before giving him time to speak, the latter said eagerly: 'I am so glad. Now you were going home to your dull lodgings, Mr Holmes; but you shall enter this carriage and come with me, and have dinner with us.' She opened the door as she was speaking, and, like a man in a dream, Frank Holmes mechanically did the last thing he would have cared at the moment to do: he stepped into the brougham, and seated himself opposite the lady and her husband.

The rest of the way down to Charing Cross, Mrs Musgrave, leaning towards him, kept talking away, in a voice musical to listen to, words he hardly understood, what with the noise of traffic and the confusion into which his thoughts had fallen. At the hotel he helped her from the brougham, and in the vestibule she said prettily: 'I shall only ask ten minutes to dress. Will it be too long to keep you gentlemen waiting for dinner?'

'That means half-an-hour, Frank,' observed Musgrave when she had gone up-stairs. 'Come down and let's have a cigarette while waiting.'

They went down to the smoking-room, and Holmes, observing Musgrave beckon to a waiter, said: 'Nothing for me, Musgrave.'

'Not a whisky-and-seltzer?'

'Not even that.'

But the man returned presently with a quantity of whisky in a tumbler, which caused Holmes to glance incredulously at his friend. His doubts were soon decided by seeing Musgrave, after the addition of a little of the mineral water, drink the contents of the glass at a draught. And then, looking at the man, he was struck by an alteration in his appearance: he looked flabby and pale.

'What is the matter, Musgrave?' he could not help asking.

'Matter?' answered Musgrave sharply. 'Pausing a minute or so, the influence of the liquor which he had drunk produced a softer mood, and he said: 'I have a horror of these things. My wife is so interested—excited, in fact—over that woman's murder, that she would take me to the police court to-day to hear the whole thing. She had not patience to wait till the evening papers, which I told her would have a full report.'

'So you were in the courthouse? So was I; but I did not see you.'

'I was sick of it. I have always detested murders and sensations of every kind. I shouldn't have even read the details of this case in the papers,' said Musgrave, turning in his chair, 'only it happened to be a man I had known. But not even that would have induced me to go to the court, if it hadn't been for Lucy.'

'Naturally, as a woman, Mrs Musgrave's feelings are strong on the matter.'

'I suppose so; and her southern blood is warmer than ours. However,' he added, 'she is satisfied now, since the fellow doesn't seem to have a chance.'

Frank Holmes wished from his soul he had had the presence of mind to decline the invitation; he even went so far as to cast about in his mind for an excuse to go now. He could find none, of course. He hoped they would not spend the next two hours discussing the murder, for, owing to some feeling which he did not clearly understand, he was reluctant to talk about it with Musgrave and his wife. Their sentiments, strongly opposed as they seemed to be, jarred uncomfortably on him.

Mrs Musgrave was a beautiful creation, as she came down to dinner in a dress of black velvet touched with a little lace and a very modest amount of jewelry. She was certainly beautiful, yet seemed wholly unconscious of the fact. During dinner, the lady addressed almost all her conversation to Frank Holmes, and as she did not once allude to the topic he wished to avoid, he was fairly fascinated. It was impossible to resist her, she was so charming without suspicion of effort. Frank Holmes, now and again glancing at Musgrave, silent and even gloomy, and drinking more wine than he ought, wondered more than once why so radiant and charming a creature should have given herself to such a dolt. But there was the fact to wonder at; and this evening Musgrave did not appear to so much as admire his wife.

Holmes followed up-stairs more willingly than he had gone in to dinner—Mrs Musgrave's fascinations had not been without effect. She sat down at the piano and ran her light fingers over the keys with a touch that showed her a mistress of the instrument; then Musgrave rose, and muttering some apology about 'a smoke,' left the room.

'He detests music, and he is—what is your word?—white-livered,' said Mrs Musgrave with a matter-of-fact frankness that was a little startling. 'Only fancy, Mr Holmes: he wanted to leave England as soon as he read of that murder, because, I suppose, a former schoolfellow of his was arrested for it!'

'Naturally, it was more or less of a shock to him, Mrs Musgrave.'

'But you, Mr Holmes, were a schoolfellow, and a friend as well, of Mr Faune. Did you feel disposed to go away when it happened?'

'No; of course not.'

She left the piano, and after tossing about a few books on the table, sank into a low chair near to Frank Holmes. 'I have had enough of it now,' she said with a sigh. 'I don't know why I should have been so deeply moved by the fate

of that poor girl; but now that the man is virtually condemned, I am satisfied.—Is it wicked to feel satisfied, Mr Holmes?' she asked, innocently, without raising her eyes higher than his waistcoat.

'No; certainly not, from your point of view,' he answered.

'Well, well; let us speak about something else. Of course you know London well?'

'Very well, indeed.'

'I am afraid my husband does not,' she observed, with a shade of anxiety. 'Perhaps,' she added, looking up with a blush, 'you will think it bold of me, but I feel that I would like to talk to you as a friend I have known for years.'

He did not think it bold; he thought her frankness very charming. She was not an Englishwoman, and he freely gave her the benefit of the difference.

'I feel flattered and delighted, Mrs Musgrave,' he answered, willing enough to enjoy her confidence, but hoping it would have nothing to do with her matrimonial relations. He had sense enough to shrink from that.

'Thank you, Mr Holmes,' she said, moving her chair an inch nearer to him. 'Then I will use the kind privilege you give me. I am anxious about my husband's prospects in London. I suppose he has said something to you about his views?'

'Yes,' said Holmes, pleased that her confidence was taking this direction; 'he spoke of an Emigration agency.'

'Sending poor people to Texas and Canada and other places. I suppose, wealthy as England is, there are plenty of poor people?'

'Oh, plenty indeed,' he answered with a smile.

'Then there may be some prospect for an Emigration Office?—Mr Holmes,' she said, dropping her eyes and her voice at the same time, with very pretty effect, 'we have not much money, and I am anxious for my husband to be getting an income.'

'I should not like to dishearten you, Mrs Musgrave,' he said gently, 'but London is a very difficult place in which to get an income.'

'John says,' she observed doubtfully, 'that there being no means of living for thousands in England, they will be eager to go to other countries.'

Holmes shook his head. 'That is true, as far as it goes, Mrs Musgrave. But those who are able to pay the cost of reaching and settling in a new country can do so without the aid of an agency: and those who are too poor—the great majority—want an agency that will find the necessary money for them and take the chance of ever getting it back again. I don't think that the idea will succeed.'

She was silent now, with her hands clasped and her eyes on the carpet. Holmes, contemplating her graceful head bowed in anxious reflection, thought of the man drinking whisky below. Was she thinking about him too?

She raised her head suddenly, saying half audibly, expressing her thought rather than addressing her guest: 'I don't know what we shall do,' and moved to the piano.—'May I sing, Mr Holmes? Or do you hate music too?' she asked.

For the best part of an hour she sat at the instrument, singing and playing, Frank Holmes beside her turning over the music. It was a hiatus in his existence, in which he fell into oblivion of everything except the singular enchantment of this woman's society. Nor was it that she seemed to exert her charms and accomplishments for him; had she done so, probably they would have failed of effect; but she bowed her head and lowered her splendid voice in devout rendering of a piece from the *Stabat Mater* or one of the Masses familiar to her ear in her native country; and sang with pink brow and swelling bosom the passionate love-songs of the South, with equal unconsciousness of his presence beside her. Nor was the power of the spell over Frank Holmes lessened when, turning quickly on the stool, an expression of disgust swept over her face, and was succeeded by an ill-concealed look of distress. While she was singing, her husband had returned and entered the room unobserved, and was now lying on the sofa in a drunken stupor.

Mrs Musgrave left the piano, and without noticing her husband further, said: 'Will you have coffee, Mr Holmes?'

'Thanks, no. I must say good-night, Mrs Musgrave, and thank you for a most delightful evening.'

She went to the door with him, and hesitating there a moment, walked with him down the corridor to the elevator. As he was about to touch the bell, she said, looking in his face with a sadness that was very touching: 'I wish, Mr Holmes, we had a prospect of living in London. It would be so pleasant to have you for a friend, to come to us of an evening. Shall you come to-morrow?'

'A thousand thanks, Mrs Musgrave. I could desire no greater pleasure; but I am not able to promise for the evening. I shall call during the day, however. And now, good-night again, Mrs Musgrave.'

'Good-night,' she said.

When Holmes reached the street, instead of going to his lodgings, he turned down to the Embankment for a quiet stroll and half an hour's thinking. For half that time he was able to think of nothing but the woman he had just left.

'Hang the fellow!' he exclaimed, flinging the stump of a cigar into the river; 'the possession of such a wife ought to fill him with ambition. —What will be the end of it?' he thought, remembering what she had dropped about their not having 'much money,' and the state in which he had left Musgrave. Any 'end of it' would be good enough for the man; but it was terrible to think of a woman like Lucy Musgrave being dragged down to the degradation of a fallen husband. She had touched the young man's chivalry.

If he had temporarily forgotten his promise to Mary Clayton, Frank Holmes made up for the delinquency by sitting over the problem of Margaret Neale's death till two hours past midnight. As stated in a former chapter, he had a peculiar bent for the investigation of crimes, which his exceptional knowledge of London life and acquaintance with the details of most of the great crimes committed within the past few

years had developed into a talent. Now, in regard to the murder of Margaret Neale, his attitude was this: that the course of the police was radically wrong, and that the conviction of Faune—if he were really the murderer—would be an accident rather than the logical result of a well-conceived method of action. As to Faune's guilt or innocence, he had at present no firm opinion; there was one dark passage upon which light would have to be shed before the question of guilt or innocence could be finally and completely answered. Why did Margaret Neale leave the house that Saturday night? It was here, in the opinion of Frank Holmes, that the pursuit ought to have commenced; but the police, finding no scent to start upon, had run promiscuously about, trusting to chance rather than intelligent direction. The arrest of Faune was the consequence of this course of action.

On the jury, with the evidence before him that was given at the police court, he would still have demanded the completion of the case by a clearly established answer to the question, why did Margaret Neale go to the Park that night? To his mind the question was a vital one; and it was to throw light upon the motive of the woman's fatal act that he now bent himself, not reckoning as to whether it would help to convict or acquit the prisoner. But though it has been said that Holmes was as yet without a firm opinion as to Faune's guilt or innocence, he was, even in the face of the damning evidence, still unaccountably disposed to doubt that the man was capable of such an act. Faune's disappearance the very next evening tended rather to increase than to diminish Holmes's doubts as to his guilt. Would it not be better for him to have stood his ground, if guilty, than to have aroused suspicion by flight? The manner of the murder indicated an amount of cool and methodical premeditation with which, in his opinion, a disappearance like that of Faune was inconsistent. He must have had, it was true, a very strong motive for his extraordinary and, it might turn out, fatal behaviour; but this was a secondary point of interest in comparison with the vital one of the reason of Margaret Neale's secret visit to Hyde Park the night she met her death.

Holmes sprang out of bed early next morning with a light flashing upon him; and without waiting to have breakfast, he jumped into a cab and drove up to Fleet Street.

THE REAL BARATARIA.

WHEN Mr Gilbert chose the kingdom of Barataria for the scene of his latest *jeu d'esprit*, we wonder if he was haunted by vague memories of the 'Pirates of Penzance,' and so came to choose the name of another pirate kingdom for the title of his play? Perhaps so, possibly not. But at anyrate there was once a real kingdom of Barataria, and not so very long ago either. Moreover, like the operatic kingdom, it was ruled by two brothers; though, instead of being merely peaceful gondoliers, they were out-and-out pirates of the most approved fashion—somewhat after the whisky-drinking type of the chorus in 'Paul Jones,' but thirstier; at least bloodthirstier. The

haunt of these miscreants of the good old times was the Island and Bay of Barataria, on the north coast of the Gulf of Mexico, near the delta of the Mississippi, in a sheltered creek to the west of that great river's mouth, and in the territory of Louisiana. The whole Gulf coast of Louisiana is a sea-marsh, a huge, wet, level expanse, covered everywhere with marsh-grasses shoulder-high, and indented by long bays like that of Barataria. This contorted and indented shore-line is broken up into masses of small reedy islands, with mysterious passages winding between them, whose undisturbed recesses were only known to a few oyster-gatherers, smugglers, and pirates. These alone knew their way through the weary miles of still, brownish water, silent and weird, their monotony only relieved by the smooth shining green of the rushes or the reefs of dazzling storm-blown sand.

Such was the appropriate haunt of the Baratarian pirates in the first decade of this century, for the Gulf had been filled in the course of the wars of France with that country's privateers. The prey they sought was the rich commerce of Spain; and when driven from Guadeloupe and Martinique by the English, they had found this retreat amid the tangled water-ways and pathless windings of the marshy shore of Louisiana an almost ideal pirates' home. It was handy, too, for trade with New Orleans, some miles away up the Mississippi; for the merchants of that enterprising city had no scruples about receiving stolen property. In fact, the scandalous openness of their traffic with the buccaneers brought loud condemnations upon the citizens and officials of Louisiana. But little cared they for condemnations while their profits came rolling merrily in each time the Baratarian pirates sailed home from the golden Spanish Main.

Now, about this time there lived in New Orleans two brothers, Jean and Pierre Lafitte. Jean was the younger—a handsome man, fair in complexion, but with black hair and eyes, and neatly shaved. He had the traditional courtesy of the Paul Jonesian school, though at times irascible even as Bouillabaisse. The elder brother, Pierre, was not quite such a showy pirate, and was more fitted for his previous occupation as a blacksmith than was the handsome, if not operative, Jean. Pierre pretended to be nothing but 'a seafaring man;' but all the same he meant business, and had an air of conscious respectability which served him in good stead. In course of time Jean the handsome became tired of respectability, and in 1808 set up as a merchant, still ostensibly in a legitimate way; but soon both he and his brother became the agents of the privateers in Barataria. Their trade grew to be impudently open. Merchants gave and took orders for their goods in the streets of New Orleans as openly as for the merchandise of New York, and the brothers became wealthy and wicked. They were not satisfied merely with the agency business, but became the recognised chiefs of the Baratarian buccaneers, and won both for themselves and their followers considerable booty. The handsome and operative Jean did not at first go to sea. On the contrary, he did the gay and festive traditional business of the 'dashing highwayman' type on land, varying the solid business of his

agency and barter of captured goods with frequent attendances at country balls, fluttering the hearts of the Louisiana maidens, and enticing the youths to help him in his piratical ventures. Things went on gaily: the American government sent out expeditions against them, but the bold buccaneers only laughed, and ran back into their watery fastnesses, whither no other ship could follow them.

Occasionally, Pierre, the elder, tried to keep up his character for respectability. When, for instance, Venezuela set up as a separate State for herself in 1811, Pierre cordially recognised the new Republic, and procured letters of marque from its Government, ran up the Venezuelan flag, and posed as a Venezuelan patriot, while all the time they scoured the West Indian and American seas for booty. They reached the height of their fortunes in the year 1813, when (according to the authorities) they were frightfully wicked and committed no end of depredations. They became such a nuisance that Spain, England, and the United States pursued them as their avowed enemies.

But as this persecution increased, the buccaneers became bolder and more outrageous than ever. The dashing Jean in 1813 actually fired upon an American revenue officer, and nearly did for him altogether. Next year, he killed an inspector; and even Pierre's previous respectability was now tarnished. The Federal courts became more active. Finally, the two pirate kings were captured, but, like true operative heroes, evaded their captors, and, in the mournful words of the expeditionary commander, 'inexplicably disappeared.' Soon afterwards, however, Pierre was retaken, and then followed a delightful piece of piratical diplomacy. England at that time was still at war with America, including of course Louisiana. The British commander seems to have sent two officers to treat with Jean, offering him even a captain's commission, if he could stop his piratical games and help to invade Louisiana under the British. Lafitte was courteous and polite. He begged the officers to beware of his Baratarian followers, who might perhaps injure them, and invited them to come to his dwelling on the island. Strange to say, the officers accepted the spider's invitation, and walked cheerfully into his parlour. Of course they were seized and imprisoned. Next day, however, the Paul Jones spirit which always animated him made Jean apparently ashamed of this trick, and pitying the officers' simplicity, he let them go in peace, merely asking for a fortnight 'to put his affairs in order,' after which he would be 'entirely at the disposal' of the British commander. He next proceeded to write to his friend Blanque, of the Louisiana legislature, disclosing the British designs upon Louisiana, and requesting as a *quid pro quo* 'some amelioration in the condition of his brother,' who was still in prison. The effect of this mild request was instantaneous. Next day, an advertisement appeared in the New Orleans papers offering one thousand dollars reward for the apprehending of Pierre Lafitte, who had once more 'inexplicably disappeared.'

To make a long story short, we must now only chronicle a big sea-fight between the two pirate kings and their followers on the one side and a

large fleet from New Orleans on the other, since New Orleans determined after all to suppress the pirates instead of accepting their services. This fight resulted in the defeat of the buccaneers. Their nest at Barataria was broken up, and many pirates were captured. But Pierre and Jean escaped.

Their later history is full of adventure and very curious. Pierre's innate love of respectability got the better of him again, and he and his brother both fought against the English at the battle of New Orleans, under the American general Jackson (1815), and were gratefully thanked for 'their courage and fidelity.' After this Pierre disappears from history; but Jean's old piratical Paul Jonesian instincts asserted themselves once more, and he returned to buccaneering. The end of this dramatic pirate is lost in a mass of tradition. His name, if not his presence, was the terror of the Gulf and Strait of Florida as late as 1822. But in that year the United States navy swept those waters with vigour and success, and from that time forth the Baratarian buccaneers became totally extinct. Perhaps lured by old associations, their ghosts may have sought the Savoy, and after reading the name of their beloved land upon the bills, have passed onward to the Prince of Wales's to watch the comparatively respectable career of Jean's model hero, Paul Jones.

JACK DELANCEY'S FOREMAN.

A WESTERN LOVE-STORY.

BY WILLIAM ATKINSON, AUTHOR OF 'CHARLIE RANSOM.'

WHEN the second son of the Right Honourable the Earl of St Marylebone, commonly known as the Honourable John Wentworth Richelieu Delancey, threw up his commission as a lieutenant in Her Majesty's Life Guards Blue, and vacated his apartments in the Albany, he purposed making an entirely fresh start in life. To accomplish this he not only left his native land, literally to pitch his tent some six thousand miles to the westward of the British metropolis, but also repudiated so much of his name as was not absolutely necessary for his own identification and the exigences of business and society in the Far West.

That he was tolerably successful in his endeavours to construct his own fortune may be inferred from the fact that, some four years after the Honourable John's sudden disappearance from sundry Belgravian ballrooms and Pall Mall club-houses, plain Jack Delancey found himself the owner of a trifling matter of thirty thousand acres of rich grazing lands, over which roamed the finest and largest herd of shorthorns in Wyoming Territory. Above and beyond all this, Jack Delancey was the most popular young man in the eastern part of the Territory, both among his neighbours—who were not very numerous—and with his 'cowboys,' who were decidedly numerous. To them all, after the Western style, he was Jack Delancey—no more and no less. But although this energetic scion of the House of St Marylebone had discarded the 'Honourable' and the 'Wentworth' and the

'Richelieu,' and had transformed 'John' into 'Jack,' he was still a Delancey. He might have called himself Moses Smith—he might even have adopted a Yankee drawl and seasoned the same with powerful Western slang, but he would still have remained a Delancey.

For, notwithstanding that the young man affected big untanned boots, buckskin breeches, a red shirt, and a sombrero hat; though he dined at twelve o'clock with 'the boys,' and excused without a murmur such luxuries as table linen, cut glass, and silver-ware; though he slept in a hammock, rolled up in rather coarse blankets, and took his morning plunge in the little creek which furnished bathing facilities for all his men—he was still Jack Delancey, and it needed not the courtesy title accorded him in Burke's *Peerage* to proclaim this fine specimen of a sturdy Briton as the 'Honourable' Jack Delancey. So, although all the stockmen and the farmers and the cowboys within fifty miles of the Delancey ranch freely addressed the wealthy young Englishman as 'Jack,' they cheerfully yielded him such marked deference as was never paid to any other man in the Territory, and such as Jack Delancey himself had never dreamed of demanding.

It was at the first big 'round-up' after Jack's arrival in the West, and the boys were dining after a hard morning's work branding the young cattle.

'That thar Delancey o' yours is blooded!' said a gaunt Kentuckian from a neighbouring ranch. 'He's got the generwine liquid in his veins, you kin bet! He's squar', boys, an' he's fair, so he is.'

'Be me faith, he is that same!' responded a son of Erin. 'He's a lad after St Patrick's own heart. Shure he's aigual to none—arrah, thin, be jabers, I mane he's second to none!'

'It wur told up to the Station, when I wur over last month, as he wur a dook or a lord-mayor or sumthin' when he wur on the old sod. I'm a trifle shy of sech-like pranks as palmin' off incogniter. Looks kinder slipperly, as if a feller wur 'shamed of his own name an' previous record.'

This last speaker was Calvin Larned, a ranch man of small means and smaller endeavour, who made a practice of 'throwing mud' at his neighbours, and who was really only tolerated for the sake of his daughter Metta.

'That's right, Cal! Wouldn't be you if you didn't shoot your dirty mud,' retorted one of the men. 'Jack Delancey's got grit and sand, anyhow, which is more than can be said of you.'

'And I tell you one thing, boys,' said a strapping young fellow, as the men mounted their ponies to resume their work; 'Jack Delancey has got something beside pluck—he's got a great kind heart and clean hands. It doesn't make any difference whether he was a lord-mayor or a lord-chancellor over yonder—he was a *gentleman*, and he's that yet.—Now, boys, whoop 'em up! Stir up those critters lively!'

This last champion of the individual under discussion was Jack Delancey's foreman. Just who he was or where he hailed from, not even his employer knew. He had introduced himself as Spencer Knight, and claimed—although his years were less than thirty—to be an 'old

Western.' He told Jack that he was originally from 'the East,' but had settled in Wyoming when he was very young, with the intention of 'growing up with the country.'

How Delancey became acquainted with Spencer Knight matters little. The Englishman stumbled across him in Kansas City, where Knight—after the manner of Wyoming stockmen during the dull season—was indulging in a 'toot.' Delancey rendered the young fellow, who was a man after his own heart and about his own age, a valuable service, which saved Knight from the disgrace of arrest and possible imprisonment; thereby placing the Western man for ever in his debt. This was before Jack had located as a ranchman. Being a fairly good judge of human nature, and rightly estimating that Spencer Knight would not speedily forget a kindness, Delancey invited that young man to enter his service. The compact which they then made had never been regretted by either; for, after four years of hard work and constant companionship, if Knight beheld in Jack Delancey his ideal of a gentleman and a friend, Jack knew, as well as he was aware of his own existence, that with his faithful servant and friend, Spencer Knight, he might safely entrust his possessions, his life, and—his honour. And by Jack Delancey of Wyoming Territory, honour was as highly treasured as ever it had been by the Honourable John Wentworth Richelieu Delancey of Her Majesty's Life Guards Blue.

Now, although Cal Larned had uttered from time to time many disparaging remarks in regard to his prosperous young neighbour similar to his speech at the 'round-up' dinner-party, he was in reality very anxious to secure Jack Delancey for a son-in-law. As a matter of fact it looked as if this ambition of the lazy stockman would in all probability be gratified. In older communities, Cal Larned's surliness and general aptitude for picking quarrels might have been laid to that very convenient scapegoat, dyspepsia. On the plains of Wyoming that disease is unknown, and as cowboys usually 'call a spade a spade,' they passed upon Calvin Larned the very laconic but expressive verdict of 'mean cuss.' To his general meanness Larned added the vice of laziness, for which reason, undoubtedly, he was tolerably civil to Jack Delancey, and encouraged his pretty daughter Metta to accept the attentions paid her by the handsome Englishman. He figured on the probability that if Jack should marry Metta he might 'pool' his business interests with those of his son-in-law by turning over his miserably small herd of cattle to Delancey, and himself roam hither and thither at his own sweet will and at Jack's expense.

How the unsavoury and unsatisfactory Calvin ever became possessed of so pretty and good a girl as Metta Larned is one of those conundrums the answers to which are locked securely in Nature's sealed books. When Jack Delancey settled in Wyoming, Metta was twenty years old. She had then lived with her father on the plains for five or six years, having left her mother a thousand miles away in an Illinois graveyard. How Jack Delancey came to pay marked attentions to this girl is no conundrum at all. She was the only marriageable girl within a day's ride of the Delancey ranch. Women are scarce articles in Wyoming, and unmarried women

are especially few and far between. Metta Larned was unmarried, she was young, and she was pretty. Not only so; she was well informed, fairly well educated, and possessed of much good common-sense. She was, from a social standpoint, the superior of all her neighbours, except Jack Delancey and, perhaps, Spencer Knight. (Knight was peculiarly reticent in regard to his antecedents, though that he had received a liberal education became constantly more apparent.)

Yes, Metta Larned was pretty; but she had not the patrician beauty of a hundred-and-one young dames whose acquaintance and favour Delancey had forsworn when he struck out for the West. Met was clever; but there were many branches of knowledge that formed the ABC of Jack's own sister's education, of which the girl was as ignorant as she was of Greek verbs and Egyptian hieroglyphics. Met dressed 'nattily,' yet her neat home-made gowns would have presented a rather 'dowdy' appearance alongside the most ordinary efforts of Worth or Elise. To sum up: Met Larned could thoroughly appreciate a good book in good English, she could make an apron or hemstitch a handkerchief with the utmost neatness, and she could manufacture pastry which would have reflected credit upon a Parisian chef. But then—

When Jack Delancey first saw Met, on a breezy summer afternoon, with the sleeves of her simple white dress rolled up, a huge linen apron protecting her from the dusty flour, while with her chubby hands she 'fixed up' a batch of bread for supper, the ex-guardsmen involuntarily confessed to himself that the girl looked 'killing.' But, later on, as he pondered over a cigar, Jack Delancey's good sense forced him to admit that it would be extremest folly in him to think of a girl like Met Larned as his future wife. It was not snobbery, in that Delancey's early training, old associations, and family ties compelled him invariably to compare Met with his sister and his mother—always to the disadvantage of pretty Met Larned. Jack was swayed by honesty of purpose, and he resolved never to 'make love' to Met; being Jack Delancey, he kept his resolution.

But, nevertheless, Jack found it very pleasant on Sunday afternoons to ride over to the Larneds' cottage, five miles away, and indulge in a chat with Metta. If he desired excuse, he found it in the paper which came to him with his mail every Saturday, and which Metta liked to read. Jack discovered a keener satisfaction in taking tea—supper, they call it in Wyoming—with Metta than he had ever experienced in sipping souchong from dainty china cups in London drawing-rooms. Metta's suppers were substantial affairs—delicious beefsteaks and the lightest of light hot bread, with butter that the dairy-maids at Delancey Park had never surpassed. Such meals were peculiarly appreciated by Jack after a long week of tough meat, indifferent potatoes, and hardtack! And Jack reciprocated Metta's hospitality whenever he journeyed to Cheyenne—as he frequently did—by bringing the girl a new novel or 'something pretty.' So they became good comrades, and both enjoyed amazingly the long quiet Sunday afternoons. But their regard and esteem for each other stopped just short of love; for, after three years, Metta Larned's affection for

the Englishman was no deeper than was Jack Delancey's liking for the girl.

Unfortunately, on the plains, as well as in other primitive and sparsely settled communities, actions and words frequently cause more weight than they would do in large social centres. Therefore, Calvin Larned was not alone in surmising that Jack Delancey intended, ultimately, to make Metta his wife. All 'the boys' looked upon such a climax as a foregone conclusion, and even Spencer Knight shared in the general opinion. Indeed, this belief alone prevented Knight himself from entering the race for Met Larned; for the foreman, who had never exchanged more than twenty sentences with Metta, loved the girl with an affection which never paused to make psychological estimate or social comparisons—a love that was only surpassed by his deep and undying loyalty to Delancey, for whose sake he kept his secret so well that not a living soul ever once dreamed of it.

Cal Larned's derogatory remarks at the 'round-up' anent Jack Delancey were not nearly so severe as his mental comments upon the same live subject. In his own mind he thought that the Englishman had been 'foolin' around' Metta quite long enough.

One Sabbath when Spencer Knight and most of 'the boys' had gone over to Cheyenne with a couple of hundred young steers to ship by the railroad to Chicago, Delancey, as was his custom on Sunday mornings in summer, brought his hammock outside the long low shanty, swung it on the shady side of the building, lit his pipe, and stretched himself out to enjoy the three-weeks-old *Illustrated London News*.

'Mornin', Jack!' exclaimed a voice—the only voice whose accents usually disgusted Delancey.

'Good-morning,' replied Jack, lazily looking up. He noticed that his visitor was afoot, and added: 'You didn't walk over, Larned?'

'Not much, I didn't! I seen your barn door open as I come up, an' found a empty stall; so I hitched my pony an' gev him a feed o' your oats—'spose that's all right?'

'Oh, certainly; you are very welcome,' said Jack, as vexed as a man could well be with Larned's take-it-for-granted style, but willing to tolerate the fellow for his daughter's sake.

'Purty dry an' dusty, Jack. Can't yer pass the bottle, me son? A smell o' rye or Bourbon, or even a couple o' fingers of gin, wouldn't go bad.'

'I don't like my men to use liquor, so do not use it myself, and have none on the place. You will find good spring water at the well, yonder, and plenty of milk in the cellar. That's the best I can do for you, Larned. Help yourself.'

But neither milk nor water possessed any charms for Cal Larned. He threw himself full length upon the rough bench which ran along the shanty, and filled his mouth with fine-cut tobacco, which he chewed very carefully for the space of five minutes. He then succeeded in drowning a grasshopper some seventeen feet away from him by a dexterous discharge of black juice, and proceeded directly to the matter which just then accounted for his presence at the Delancey Ranch. 'Comin' over to our place to-day, Jack?'

Delancey, in despair, threw down his paper and replied: 'Yes, I think so.'

'Well now, Jack, how long is it sence you planted yourself down here?'

'About four years.'

'So? How long was you here when I gev yer a knock-down to my gal?'

'Almost a year.'

'So? Well, now, I ain't much of a scholar, so ef my calkerlations are wrong, kindly ke-rect me. One year from four years leaves three years. Now, on yer own showin', you've been sparkin' Met for three years. Now, Jack, when are yer goin' to marry my gal?'

Jack sat up in his hammock and dangled one leg on the ground. Slowly he repeated Larned's words: 'When—am—I—going—to—marry—your—girl? You mean, when shall I marry Metta?—You are not indulging in a confoundedly poor joke, I hope, Larned?'

'Do I look as ef I wur a sky-larkin', or as ef I meant bizness? No, Jack Delancey, I'm askin' you a squar' quesching, an' ef you're the man they say you are, you'll gev me a straight answer. How is it?'

'My good fellow, I have never made love to your daughter for the very reason that I have never dreamt of marrying her. I have every respect for Met, and esteem her very much; but I have been particularly careful to give her no false impressions. Besides, I believe Metta and I understand each other quite well. Metta'—

'You speak for yerself, Delancey. Don't I know all about her? Ain't I seen her change in the last three years until she don't think of nobody nor nothin' but you? Can't I see how she's a-growin' sick an' weary of waitin' for you to ax her?'

Jack put his other leg out of the hammock and with two of his big strides stood over his would-be father-in-law. 'Tell me one thing,' he said, in a tone of voice which indicated that it would not be well for his listener to tamper with him. 'Tell me the truth, man, of your own child. Does Met care *all that* about me, and does she really believe that—that I love her?'

'She does.'

'So help you God?'

'See here, Delancey,' said Larned, clumsily rising to his feet; 'what do you take me for? What do you suppose I care about *you*? You never used me half-way decent, anyhow. You an' yer keep-er-distance, lord-dook style! I ain't in love with you, nor yit yer belongings. I know I ain't a general favourite hereabouts. But Met's my gal, an' I'm her dad, an', curse me, Delancey, ef I'm a-goin' to stand by an' see her heart broke an' the best years of her young life fooled away by you nor yit no other gay rooster!'

'That will do,' said Jack quietly. 'I care nothing for your blustering threats. As you say, there is no love lost between you and me. But there is that which I dislike even more than Mr Larned, and you will never find me guilty of any dishonourable conduct.—Yes, I will ride over this afternoon.'

Cal Larned had acted his part well, and knew it. He was fully aware that his point was practically carried; for having succeeded in influencing a man like Jack Delancey, he knew it would be an easy matter to mould Metta to

his will; so he indulged in considerable chuckling as he shuffled off to mount his pony and ride home.

A few days later, Spencer Knight returned. In the evening, he and Delancey strolled down to the creek to smoke an after-supper pipe. 'Spence,' said Jack, 'I am going to marry Metta Larned.'

'Yes,' responded the other; 'we all thought it would come to that. I hope you will both be very happy, Delancey.'

Curiously enough, each of the men, for the first time in the course of their acquaintance, remarked a strange glumness in the other. They not only remarked it, but both remembered it very vividly. There was no gladness about Delancey's announcement, and Knight's congratulatory reply had a counterfeit ring about it.

'Next Monday,' said Jack after a pause, 'I shall start for home to make the folks over there a visit before settling down for life. You will stay and take care of things for me while I am gone, won't you, Spence? I shall not be away more than a couple of months, and during that time I should like you to have the carpenters over from Cheyenne and run up a comfortable cottage over yonder by the poplars. Consult Metta as much as possible.'

Delancey spoke so mechanically that Knight knew, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that something was wrong. But he made no inquiries.

'All right, Delancey; and when you return I shall ask for leave of absence for a similar purpose. Like yourself, I am an Englishman. There was a little unpleasantness in our family, which induced me to locate in the West some twelve years ago. The other day I saw an old friend of mine, who was passing through Cheyenne. We talked matters over, and I think past differences can now be adjusted. However, I will not pester you with my affairs to-night.'

Somehow or other, Jack Delancey was absent from his ranch eight months instead of two; so that the following summer had commenced by the time he returned to his Western quarters.

'We will leave business until to-morrow, Spence,' said Jack, as he and his first-lieutenant sauntered towards the creek. 'Let us talk of other matters to-night.'

As a matter of fact, they said nothing at all for almost half an hour. Then Delancey spoke: 'How is Metta? I have heard nothing from her for two months. I told her not to write, as I was so uncertain about starting. How is she?'

'Metta is well, very well.'

Silence again, broken this time by Knight: 'Delancey?' Both men paused in their walk, and Jack puffed violently at his pipe. 'You picked me up a stranger, and treated me like the "white man" that you are. You had faith in my manhood and you have trusted me implicitly. Have I justified your confidence?'

'You have, Spence—a thousand times over, boy. Here is my hand on it.'

'Thanks, Delancey. Now, trust me a little more, and believe that I would not pry into

your private affairs for the mere sake of being meddlesome, or to wound you. May I go ahead?'

'Surely. Let us sit on this boulder.'

'Delancey, you just asked about Metta. You do not love that girl. I knew it the night that we were last on this spot, when you told me of your engagement to her. You will never be really happy with Metta for your wife.'

'Stop,' said Jack, with a faint smile. 'This question is undebatable. I have asked Metta to marry me, and it is utterly impossible to discuss the matter.'

'But,' persisted Knight, 'you love with all your heart and soul another woman. You cannot deny that—you do not desire to deny it. You love, as you can never hope to love Metta, my sister Florence.'

'Nonsense, Spence! Lady Florence Knighton your sister?'

'The very same. You see, my dear fellow, I too am an "honourable." It was a rather shabby trick on your part, Delancey, to go over there and lose your heart to my sister, while you kept me all these months waiting to become reconciled to my father.—But, to return to our subject, You not only fell desperately in love with Flo, but you have stolen the poor girl's heart away from her.'

'Indeed, Spence, I have been strictly honourable in this matter. While at home, I made no secret of my engagement, and studiously avoided anything like a flirtation with Lady Florence. We were thrown much together, and I confess— Well, that makes no difference: I am here to keep my word with Metta.'

'I admit, Delancey,' said Knighton, rather comically, 'that in the presence of my sister you tried your best to behave like a sphinx; but—I have it on the authority of my married sister—your attempt was a signal failure: while, as for Florence, she has made a clean confession to her sister.—Now, are you going to make Flo miserable as well as yourself?'

'I am grieved to learn,' muttered Jack, 'that I have unintentionally caused your sister temporary distress. But as for myself—I think a fellow need not feel particularly miserable in living up to his word.—No; I shall marry Metta Larned.'

'Wait a while,' continued Knighton, laying his hand upon his friend's shoulder. 'Metta Larned does not love you! What do you say to that?'

'Possibly so. But how do you know that to be the case?'

'Because—why—er (you haven't a pistol about you, Delancey?)— Well, the fact is that Met loves me, and I love her; and if you do not seriously object, we should both of us like to release you from your engagement!—Yes,' he went on, 'I suppose you ought to demand an explanation and satisfaction from me for robbing you of your affianced bride. But I did not begin the robbery until I was tolerably sure that I shouldn't be striking you very hard. As I said, I surmised a good deal when you went away, and I learned much more before you started for home. A month ago, Cal Larned died—gored by a young bull—and before his death, he confessed to me that he had terrorised Met and

played a "bluff game" with you.—You are not very angry, are you, Delancey?

Jack certainly did not look very angry, and he grasped his friend's hand and shook it with remarkable vigour.

The Honourable Spencer Knighton is still known as Spence Knight on the Delancey ranch, of which he is sole proprietor; but Jack Delancey of Wyoming is no more, his friends having rechristened that gentleman with his old name when he settled down to the pleasant life of an English country Squire.

CLOCKS.

THE introduction of clocks into Great Britain we apparently owe to the Dutch. In 1368 Edward III. granted a license for three mechanics to come over from Delft in Holland, permitting them to pursue their trade in England, also for the edification of the mechanics of our own land, whereby they might be initiated in the art by the more skilful aliens. The oldest known clock in England is one which is fixed in a turret at Hampton Court. It was constructed, and there fitted up, by command of Henry VIII., in the year 1540. From the period of their introduction down to the reign of Elizabeth they were called orloges or horologes. Until after the Restoration, clocks found their patrons only in London and other large towns, for, in country houses, up to the date mentioned, the 'ancient sun-dial' held its own.

In the reign of Charles I., prior to the outbreak of the civil war, there was an improvement brought about in the mechanism of clockwork. This advance in the march of invention we owe to a native of Cheshire. Sir Joseph Wright, of Moreton, in the afore-mentioned county, was the person who originated this forward movement. There is no record of the particular points of improvement for which we are indebted to Sir Joseph; but it is certain that clockwork—which had hitherto been but crude, from a mechanical point of view—took a rapid stride towards its present state of completeness.

Amongst remarkable public clocks, there are two which stand foremost—those of Lyons and Strassburg. They are well worth attention, partly on account of their curious workmanship, and partly because of their richness of ornament and originality of design. In the former, two horsemen, fully armed *cap-à-pie*, encounter in deadly combat, as it were, and beat the hour upon each other's armour. Then a door opens, and an image of the Virgin, bearing in her arms the child Jesus, steps out. She in turn is followed by the magi, with retinue marching 'all in good order,' presenting their gifts, heralded by trumpets, which continue to breathe forth from their brazen throats while the procession is in movement. The scene which the Strassburg clock presents is as follows: At each hour, as the clock goes round, there is a cock which claps its wings; again, in this, a door opens, and an angel appears, who salutes the Virgin; then the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove descends and alights upon the shoulder of the Virgin.

About sixty-five years ago the East India Company presented the then Emperor of China with two timepieces, manufactured by English artists. They were of the finest workmanship that was ever executed. They were of similar design, and so it is only needful to describe one of them. It was in the form of a chariot, which was of solid gold. A lady is seated, in a languishing attitude, leaning her right hand on that side of the chariot. In the centre of the same side is set the clock itself, with its face outwards, and which is no larger than a shilling. It strikes and repeats, and, upon being wound up, goes for eight days. A bird, which is almost completely made up of diamonds and rubies, rests upon the lady's finger. At striking-time it flutters its wings for several minutes. It is something less than the sixteenth part of an inch from the tip of its bill to the extremity of the tail. Inside its body are contained some of the works which animate it. In her left hand the lady holds a golden tube which is little thicker than a large pin, and upon the top of which is fixed a small round ornament of the size of a sixpence. As long as the clock continues to go, this ornament moves round with a regular perpetual motion. The top of the ornament is studded thickly with precious stones, as is the whole chariot. Above the fair occupant's head is a sort of canopy, under which is placed a bell. To the inquisitive eye the bell reveals no apparent connection with the clock save as an ornament. But there is a secret communication between the two. At the hour, from under the shade of the canopy there descends a hammer, which strikes smartly and sharply against the mellow-sounding bell. This performance can be repeated at pleasure simply by touching a catch in the form of a minute diamond button. The chariot can be set in motion by the touching of a spring, and will run in either a circular or a straight direction. As it moves, there are two birds which appear as if flying in the air. It needs a close glance to discover that they are attached by wires, pliable and strong, yet no thicker than a hair, to the canopy of the chariot. The clock, together with its carriage-rest, its furniture and appointments, is a wonder of compactness, as it is a marvel of dazzling brilliancy and costliness.

IN A CALIFORNIAN CAÑON.

THE hills are verdured with the pines and firs;
On mossy banks the lady-fern peeps out,
And from the chasms and sunny slopes about,
Nature, revived and beauteous, stirs;
Where yonder bird his tiny pinions whirs,
The red-stemmed manganita is abloom
With delicate bells; and from the thicket's gloom
The linnet practises his trills and slurs.
Odours of pine and bay tree fill the air;
The sun shines warm on rocks and springing grass;
The white clouds break apart and softly pass
Out of the deep blue sky; and over there,
Where but a while ago the snow-drifts lay,
The hills wear all their mingled blue and gray.

VIRNA WOODS.

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